

THE COUNCIL LODGE

The clan in the council lodge.—There is one place where the clan finds representation as a political unit, and that is in the council lodge. No unanimity seems to exist with regard to the positions of the various clans in the council lodge, but here again the position of those clans with specific governmental functions seems to be far more stable than that of the others. The clans are generally so seated as always to be opposite their "friend" clan, from which fact a clan frequently calls its friend "my opposite." It is, however, interesting to note that this seating does not hold for two friend groups, the Water-spirit-Buffalo and Elk-Deer. The Water-spirit clan occupies a high position in the council lodge, apparently quite out of proportion to its present importance in the social organization of the tribe, but in consonance with its former importance.

Councils.—No important undertaking was ever attempted without the holding of a council. On such occasions the principal members of each clan would assemble in a long lodge and discuss in great detail. Nothing comparable to a vote that might express the desire of those assembled was taken, but the opinions of those present were always presented in their speeches. As a rule the chief, or some person especially interested in definite matter, led the discussion. Owing to the complete absence of specific examples of councils it is very difficult to obtain a very clear idea of their working. The numerous councils relating to treaties with the whites are of very little interest or significance in this connection.

There was unquestionably a regular order of entering and seating in the council lodge. What this order was it is impossible to determine now, for the statements made by different informants were contradictory. Since, however, the contradictions in the seating arrangements seemed to be correlated with different clan membership the discrepancies may be due, not to lack of knowledge but to actual differences. A few examples of the seating arrangements follow (figs. 29-32):

Description of order of entering the council lodge.—Informant, member of Bear clan. The Buffalo clan would always be the last to enter the council lodge because the members remained outside making announcements until all the others had entered. The members of the Thunderbird clan enter first, making a circuit of the lodge before taking their seats. The members of the Warrior clan followed and took their seats just opposite those of the Thunderbird clan. Then the Water-spirit clan follows, and then come the rest as indicated in the diagram. This is the only place where the Bear clan is not in control of the arrangements.

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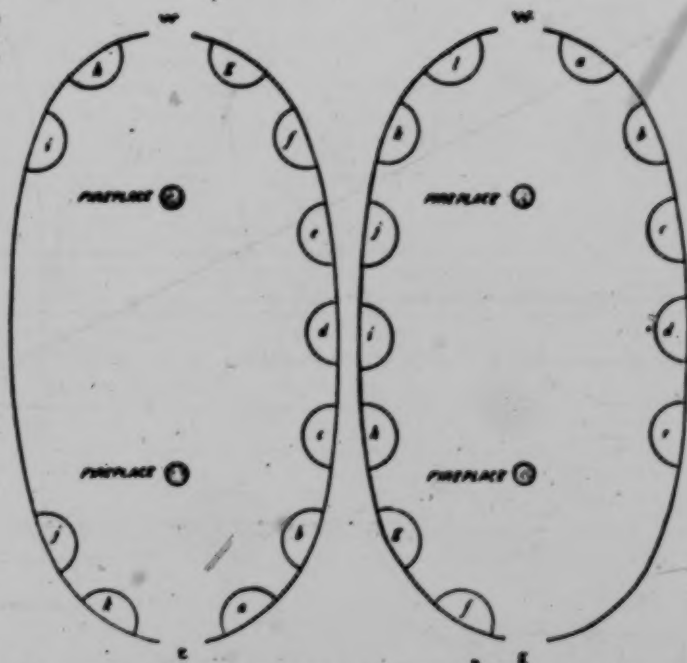


FIG. 30.—Seating arrangement in council lodge according to Thunderbird clan: a, Warrior clan; b, Water-spirit clan; c, Deer clan; d, Elk clan; e, Pigeon clan; f, Wolf clan; g, Bear clan; h, Snake clan; i, Buffalo clan; j, Eagle clan; k, Thunderbird clan. (The order of importance is from top.)

FIG. 31.—Seating arrangement in council lodge according to Bear clan: a, Thunderbird clan; b, Bear clan; c, Wolf clan; d, Pigeon clan; e, Eagle clan; f, Snake clan; g, Fish clan; h, Elk clan; i, Buffalo clan; j, Deer clan; k, Water-spirit clan; l, Warrior clan.

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WARFARE AND THE COUNCIL LODGE

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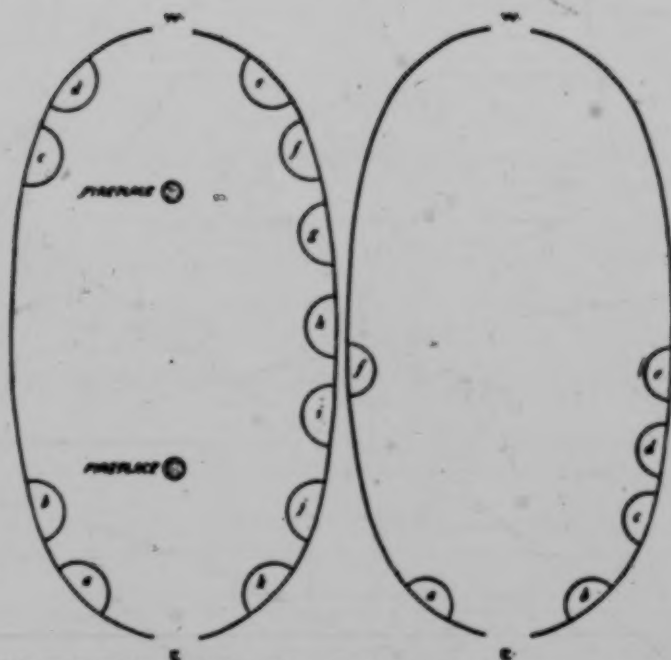


FIG. 11.—Seating arrangement in council lodge according to Thunder clan: a, Thunderbolt clan; b, Thunder clan; c, Thunder clan; d, Thunder clan; e, Thunder clan; f, Thunder clan; g, Thunder clan; h, Thunder clan; i, Thunder clan; j, Thunder clan; k, Thunder clan; l, Thunder clan; m, Thunder clan; n, Thunder clan; o, Thunder clan; p, Thunder clan; q, Thunder clan; r, Thunder clan; s, Thunder clan; t, Thunder clan; u, Thunder clan; v, Thunder clan; w, Thunder clan; x, Thunder clan; y, Thunder clan; z, Thunder clan.

FIG. 12.—Seating arrangement in council lodge according to Wolf clan: a, Thunderbolt clan; b, Thunder clan; c, Thunder clan; d, Thunder clan; e, Thunder clan; f, Thunder clan; g, Thunder clan; h, Thunder clan; i, Thunder clan; j, Thunder clan; k, Thunder clan; l, Thunder clan; m, Thunder clan; n, Thunder clan; o, Thunder clan; p, Thunder clan; q, Thunder clan; r, Thunder clan; s, Thunder clan; t, Thunder clan; u, Thunder clan; v, Thunder clan; w, Thunder clan; x, Thunder clan; y, Thunder clan; z, Thunder clan.

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622 the man that, should he was without this particular thing, to keep it and use it for all
614 time.

203 The public crier, a member of the Buffalo clan, was supposed to report to the chief
624 early every morning and receive instructions. The crier would then go all around the
623 village making the chief's desires known.

The chief had a representative at every council, generally his brother.
The chief of the village is a peacemaker, and if two members of the tribe ever get
into difficulties (i. e., quarrel) he is supposed to intercede. If in a quarrel a person
should be killed, the chief would go to the murderer and tell the latter to permit him-
self to be tied up - i. e., to give himself up to the relatives of the murdered man. If
[682] the murderer consents to do so, then his arms are tied behind him and the chief walks
in front of him carrying his sacred pipe. Then they would go to the lodge of the
murdered man's relatives. When they got there the chief would extend the stem of
the pipe toward them. They might refuse to accept the pipe thus extended, but if
any member of the family, even if it be a small child, were to take a puff from it, then
the murderer would be forgiven and turned free.

This is the capacity of a Winnebago chief.

622 Another description of the chief's rôle as intervener for a murderer
614 is as follows:
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When the Thunderbird chief wishes to save a murderer they take one of their own
chiefs, one who is well beloved, paint his back blue, and put skewers in his back, to
which they tie cords. Thus he is taken to the lodge of the murdered person's rela-
tives. The chief, when he gets there, holds his pipe of tobacco in both hands. Should
the relatives not wish to accept the peace offering they close the door in his face.
Then he returns.

614 The Thunderbird clan possessed a type of war club called a ball-
778 headed war club, which was sacred to this clan alone, and a
miniature of which was always buried with a dead body. The only
[411] other possessions were the clan war bundles. The Winnebago often
speak as though each clan had but one of these palladiums, but there
seems to be little doubt but that there were at least two and probably
more in each clan. These war bundles must be regarded as the com-
mon possession of the clan at the present time, for they can not be
alienated from the clan.* For all practical purposes, however, they
are the private property of certain individuals or families.

614 Fire was considered a sacred possession of the Thunderbird clan.
372 As mentioned before, an individual was supposed never to ask for a
firebrand from the fire of any member of the clan and was never
permitted to sit near such a fireplace. If, nevertheless, anyone
should be immodest enough to ask for one of these objects, he would
be refused, but he would be permitted to ask for any conceivable
thing else. The following incident will serve as an example of the
definite way in which this peculiar custom works. An old Winne-

* This point was very forcibly impressed upon the author when he tried to obtain the war bundle of a
man who had become a member of the Peyote cult. The man was perfectly willing to part with it, but
after repeated requests to those who happened to possess it at that particular time, he admitted that it
belonged to the clan, although they could not have taken it away from him had he remained a believer in
the old faith.

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the matter. If, on the other hand, he submitted to whatever punishment the Bear clansmen inflicted on him without resistance and apologized to them, then they would build him a new lodge and supply it with better goods than those which they had been compelled to destroy.

This is the way in which the soldiers act when they are on duty. They never jest and their word is a command. If it is not immediately obeyed, their next move is to punish. For that reason one generally listens to them and their commands. When they are not on duty they are the same as other people. Different members of the tribe are on duty at different times, for the leader changes them about frequently.

If a field of rice is found in some swamp or lake the Bear clan people are informed and they go over and keep watch over it and give every person an equal chance at picking it. If a person sneaks away and takes advantage of the others, the Bear clan people punish him.

The Bear clansmen guard the village almost all the time. When a council is held they guard the council lodge, and when a person is tried for some crime, particularly that of murder, a trial which generally takes place in the Thunderbird clan lodge, then they carefully guard this lodge, lest the prisoner try to escape or his relatives or confederates try to rescue him.

Certain actions and remarks are not permitted in the Bear clan lodge. They are the following:

To peep into the lodge.

To make the remark that they live in a nice lodge.

To sit in the doorway.

To give a deep sigh or snort inside the lodge.

Should any person do one of these forbidden things, the Bear clansmen would be compelled to give the most valued thing in the lodge to the offender.

If a man seduced a woman, he was brought to the lodge of the Bear clan and severely whipped. If the soldier whipped him too severely, he in turn was whipped.

If a murderer was brought to the Bear clan lodge and the chief of the tribe asked that the man be freed, the rest of the tribe would beg the relatives of the murdered man to relent; but if the murderer was turned over to the soldiers, they would take him to the lodge of the murdered man's relatives and let one of them kill him.

According to one informant, the Deer clansmen acted as servants to the Bear clan.

The Bear and the Wolf clans are friends, and although, as we indicated on page 201, each clan is paired off with another, the relationship of the Bear and Wolf clans is particularly intimate. It was even claimed that a Bear clansman would revenge the death of a Wolf clansman. For no other clans did the author hear this statement made. The women are addressed by the men and by each other as "my opposite," referring unquestionably to the positions in the council lodge.

SOME NOTES ON WINNEBAGO SOCIAL
AND POLITICAL ORGANIZATION¹

By TRUMAN MICHELSON

114 THE easily accessible accounts of Winnebago social organization are Morgan's *Ancient Society*,² J. O. Dorsey's *Siouan Sociology*,³ the article *Winnebago* in the *Handbook of American Indians*, initialed by James Owen Dorsey and Paul Radin,⁴ and Paul Radin's *The Clan Organization of the Winnebago*,⁵ his *Winnebago Tribe*,⁶ and lastly his *The Social Organization of the Winnebago Indians, An Interpretation*.⁷

None of these authors apparently were aware that a number of important statements on this and kindred topics are to be found in Caleb Atwater's *Remarks made on a Tour to Prairie du Chien; thence to Washington City, in 1829*.⁸ I quote from this as follows.

614 [532] Carrymaunee (walking turtle) a Winnebago chief carries a large Tortoise, fully extended, and beautifully painted, perfect in all its limbs, on his back as he marches onward at the head of the turtle tribe. In the same manner, Snakeskin marches at the head of the snake tribe, with the skin of a large snake tied around his neck. In fine, every tribe has its standard bearer, with appropriate emblems (p. 87).

622 Their form of government is aristocratical, and the whole structure of their society is equally so. The Winnebagoes are divided into seven tribes, or bands, some of these are named after animals, such as the Turtle tribe, the Snake tribe, wolf tribe, &c., and others are named after inanimate things, as the Thunder tribe. These tribes dwell in different places, in towns or villages; in each one of which, there are two Civil Chiefs, who govern that town—for instance Du Corri and Winneshiek are at the head of the government, of the Le Croix village situated near the Mississippi river, on its eastern bank, 80 miles north of Prairie Du Chien. So of all the other tribes, each one of which, has its town or seat of government, and is governed by its two civil chiefs. The civil government of the Winnebagoes, is in the hands of fourteen civil Chiefs, and when they are assembled in one council, it is the grand national council.

¹ Printed by permission of the Smithsonian Institution.

² Page 137.

³ Fifteenth Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, pp. 240-41.

⁴ Bulletin, Bureau of American Ethnology, 30, Pt. 2, pp. 958-61.

⁵ American Anthropologist, Vol. 12, 1910, pp. 209-19.

⁶ Thirty-seventh Annual Report, Bureau of American Ethnology, p. 181 et seq.

⁷ Museum Bulletin, Canada Department of Mines, Geological Survey, No. 10 (Anthropological Series, No. 5).

⁸ Published by Isaac N. Whiting, Columbus, Ohio, 1831. I have not seen the edition (of the same date) published by Jenkins and Glover. Atwater's *The Indians of the Northwest*, etc., Columbus, 1850, apparently has the same contents and pagination as his *Remarks* which I have seen. So we may presume that the 1831 edition (which I have not seen) of his *The Indians of the Northwest* is the same also. "The Writings of Caleb Atwater" (Columbus, 1833) has apparently disappeared from the Library of Congress. The proofsheets have been verified by consulting the 1830 edition, differences in capitalization being ignored.

In each village, the two civil chiefs, appoint all the officers, deemed necessary, civil and military, who obey them, implicitly. There are two ways of arriving at these high stations, by birth and by election. When the father dies, if he has a son, who has arrived at the age of manhood, and who bids fair to make a good chief—that is, if he possesses a good form, has good bodily powers and mental faculties—is brave, sedate, wise and prudent, he generally succeeds his father in the government, on his father's demise. If the chief, at his death, leave no son who is qualified for the high office of chief, but wills it to some other person, he succeeds to the government. If the chief has no son at his death, it is commonly the case, that his brother's son succeeds him. The line of succession may run out for want of a lawful heir, which is always supplied by an election. It may be changed too, where the heir is unqualified for the station. Great deference is always paid to the will of the dying chief, but every such case is always laid before a full national council, whose decision is final (p. 97).

A chief may be degraded from his rank for bad conduct. . . .

There is in every tribe, what answers to a standing army among us. The profession of arms holds out, to the great mass of the common people, the only road to the temple of fame. . . . The young man, who aspires to the honorable distinction of a "brave" or warrior, must exhibit such traits of character, as are deemed necessary for a soldier to possess, before he can be admitted into the army. When admitted, he wears on his head just as many feathers of the bald eagle, as he has slain human beings, and the size of the feathers indicate the size of his victims. . . . If the warrior has taken a captive, he has a human hand as large as life, painted either on his face, or on some part of his body, or on his blanket, some individuals have several such hands painted upon them (p. 98).⁹

At the head of the army, belonging to each tribe, there is a person who occupies the same station as a General does with us, and he appoints all the inferior officers. The chiefs when met in council, call into it, their warriors, with whom they consult, but frequently they are called to receive the orders, which are obeyed to the letter. This council call before them, persons who are interested in the trial . . . (pp. 98, 99).

If the Senate of the United States is the mildest, the most patriotic and wisest legislative assembly in the civilized world, as it truly is, the Winnebago council, is decidedly at the head of the savage world. . . . The great body of the people have very little influence, almost none, with this council, and they never appear before it unless they are summoned to attend it.—They have no voice in electing the chiefs and in fact no political influence. The civil chiefs and the chief warriors, have in their hands, the whole government of the community, and they govern as they please. Disobedience to the orders of the rulers is punished with death, though, like the British nation, the Indians are not savages enough to cut the traitor into quarters after hanging him until he is dead (pp. 99, 100).

The female part of it, exercised the same influence among the women, that the chiefs did among the men, and the presents they expected from us, had to be better, than those given to the common people. The daughter of a chief, never mar-

⁹ Quite different from the data given by Radin, *The Winnebago Tribe*, pp. 161, 162.